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ABSTRACT

Thirty-five indicators of the need for change in a higher education institution are outlined. They are divided into two large categories: those over which the institution has little or no control, and those over which it has some or total control. Within those categories are subcategories: indicators for short-range planning, and those for long-range planning. Some examples of long-range indicators over which the institution has little control are: shifts in community demography and labor demand, enterprises targeted for government subsidy, occupational trends, changing student profiles, and trends in student interests. Short-range indicators for conditions over which the institution has little control include: manpower markets and enrollment, four-year colleges offering two-year programs, average student loads, and budget uncertainty. Long-range planning indicators over which the institution has some control include: physical campus environment, proportion of budget funds from soft money, and a decrease in community college transfer students. Among the short-range planning indicators with some institutional control are: admission standards and policies, hiring from within, unmet program needs, program mix and potential clientele, increasing unit costs, increase in percentage of part-time faculty, percent of faculty teaching outside their primary fields of specialization, regular faculty assigned to unusual teaching hours, staffing formulas, early retirement policies, teaching loads, registration policies, career counseling, placement of graduates, budgets for supplies and travel, faculty salaries as a proportion of the budget, and fees for selective services. (MSE)

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A Report To The
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# *Signals for Change*

## Stress Indicators for Colleges and Universities

HE 013 186

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NOV 3 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| PART A<br>INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS LITTLE OR NO CONTROL | 4 |
| Long-Range Indicators Over Which the Institution Has Little or No Control | 5 |
| Short-Range Indicators Over Which the Institution Has Little or No Control | 16 |
| PART B<br>INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS SOME OR TOTAL CONTROL | 20 |
| Long-Range Indicators Over Which the Institution Has Some or Total Control | 22 |
| Short-Range Indicators Over Which the Institution Has Some or Total Control | 25 |

## INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities have long adjusted to meet the ever shifting conditions of society. The response has mostly been ad hoc as conditions required it. Some adjustments, such as inaugurating new programs to reflect new disciplinary specialization, have been planned but most not as an integral part of academic development plans. Institutions largely respond and react rather than anticipate or initiate.

In recent years, in attempts to broaden awareness of social change, scholars tried to set up social indicators that would forecast the need for selected responses by the operating institutions of the society. For higher education, most such efforts focus on indicators for determining if an institution is in real financial difficulty rather than under poor management.

The art of supplying indicators dates back at least to the oracles of Delphi, and one must admit that even today the selection and application of indicators remains mostly an art, one that is now informed by data and trends, but still a matter of preference not of science.

Because financial, enrollment, programmatic and other factors will cause great stress for the next dozen years, and will require substantial readjustment by colleges and universities, we provide a list of thirty-five "indicators," "warning signals," and "signs of the Ides" that could alert an institution to impending need for changes in policies and activities under certain circumstances.

The caveat on use of most indicators is the phrase, "under certain circumstances." An indicator may presage nothing at all or be fairly accurate in predicting an outcome. An example is the relationship between the number of applications for admission and the number of students actually enrolling from the applicant group. If institutional history shows a high, steady relationship then it may be an excellent predictor. But if the historical relationship between the numbers has fluctuated widely, the most recent numbers would indicate little of significance.

Three societal factors or trends illustrate those over which the institution has no control, and three conditions internal to the institutions over which it may exercise substantial influence. The three societal factors or trends are:

1. Low birthrates resulting in fewer possible applicants from historic enrollment pools.
2. Apparent public pressure to reduce or stabilize governmental expenditures.
3. Apparent public and student interest in vocational, occupational, and professional programs in preference to liberal arts and humanities.

These will surely test the capacity of most institutions to adjust to conditions of the 1980s. The three internal factors which will challenge the capability of institutions to change are:

1. Increased proportion of faculty with tenure and expectations of job security.
2. Diminished fiscal flexibility, which limits management choices, resulting from past and continuing inflationary pressures on costs.
3. Reduced program and personnel flexibility resulting from restrictions on change imposed by law and collective bargaining agreements.

An indicator becomes such only if the conditions which the indicator describes apply directly to either the internal or external operations and environment of a specific institution. One institution will find a particular indicator of value while another would find it useless. A cluster of indicators all pointing in the same direction (without a different set giving countervailing signals) will be more reliable than a single indicator.

Each of the thirty-five indicators presented should be studied with great care in relation to specific institutional data, trends, environment, and type. Only those appropriate to the particular

institution should be used. Caveats about the use of an indicator are seldom presented; the positive attributes are emphasized. All thirty-five, if used as a check list, should provide some useful insights for planners at institutional and system levels.

We do not pretend to be exhaustive with thirty-five indicators, nor will all of them have equal usefulness in a particular case. Importantly, these indicators are not solely or even primarily relevant to the coming years of almost inevitably declining enrollments; most of the information would be that which institutional leaders and managers would find useful at any time. However, the uncertainties of enrollment and funding trends give the current need for such information an urgency that it did not have in the past.

Indicators might be classified in an almost endless number of ways none of which is completely satisfactory. In this report we attempt to use two characteristics — the lead time provided the institution and the amount of control the institution has to redirect or otherwise shape the condition. A simple matrix illustrates our classification. It shows that we have twelve long-term indicators, nine over which the institution has little or no control; and twenty-three short-term ones, only four of which the institution has no control. Generally, the longer the lead time provided by an indicator the less control the institution has over changing the threatening condition itself. In every case, however, the college or university can respond to the condition with actions that should result in lessening or countering the influence of the pertinent condition.

Classification of Indicators

| Lead Time | Extent of Control: Little or none (Part A, p. 5) | Extent of Control: Some or total (Part B, p. 20) |
|---|---|---|
| Long term | 9 indicators (pp. 5-15) | 3 indicators (pp. 22-24) |
| Short term | 4 indicators (pp. 16-19) | 19 indicators (pp. 25-43) |

## PART A

## INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS LITTLE OR NO CONTROL

These indicators usually arise out of broad trends and social forces, and, although the institution is part of that environment, it does not have the capacity to change the trends or forces. Only those which appear to be most pertinent to higher education are mentioned here.


| Long-range indicators | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Shifts in the socio/economic and ethnic mix of an area population | 5 |
| 2. | Changes and fluctuations in labor demand for business, industry, and government located in the college service area | 8 |
| 3. | Index of enterprises targeted for subsidies by the federal government | 9 |
| 4. | Live births and the demand for teachers | 10 |
| 5. | Source of students by geographic area | 11 |
| 6. | Occupational trends | 12 |
| 7. | Changing student profiles | 13 |
| 8. | Student flow from high schools | 14 |
| 9. | Trends of student interest in disciplines and professions | 15 |

| Short-range indicators | | |
|---|---|---|
| 10. | Manpower markets and enrollment | 16 |
| 11. | Four-year colleges offering two-year programs | 17 |
| 12. | Average student loads | 18 |
| 13. | Amount of uncertainty in obtaining the next budget | 19 |

LONG-RANGE INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS LITTLE OR NO CONTROL

1. Shifts in the socio/economic and ethnic mix of the population of the institution's service area

Given the differences in college attendance rates by income levels and by ethnic origin, it would seem of utmost concern to an institution to be aware of major population shifts both in and out of its service area.

A. Changes in ethnic composition over at least the next dozen years will have serious consequences for many large cities and even some states.

1) Blacks have a much lower high school participation rate than whites and, proportionately, far fewer of them graduate from high school. This result is even more characteristic of the Hispanic population, especially of Mexican origin.

2) An increasing presence of either minority group will, in the short run, mean lower enrollment and usually the necessity for more remedial work.

3) While these minority groups continue to increase their capability to graduate from high school, that trend has been a relatively slow one. Currently, much attention is being paid to basic skill courses in the lower schools, and more of those who do graduate will, it is hoped, be eligible for college entrance.

4) As the competencies of these young people improve, some tapering off in enrollment drop is likely to occur. But it is highly unlikely that the rate of enrollment in college for these minority groups will equal the white rate for some years, especially in four-year colleges and the universities.

5) The populations of Asian background currently send a greater proportion of their young people to college (39%) than do whites (32%). If lower socio/economic Asian groups enter the country, that high rate may decrease a little. At any rate, as response is made to this population, the need for more courses in English as a second language will be essential.

B. Changes in socio/economic composition of a service area population will also have serious consequences.

1) Historically, the lower the socio/economic level of a group the lower the college attendance rate. The higher the socio/economic level the higher the college-going rate. These relationships continue to hold. Hence, shifts in the socio/economic mix of the service area population will require college adaptations — whether the shift is up or down in terms of the socio/economic level.

2) If middle-class housing becomes more and more expensive, families with school and college age children are less likely to move in, or if already resident, may be forced to move out.

3) As lower socio/economic groups move in, it may mean an influx of possible applicants, but it will also entail higher costs for remedial education and careful attention to the nature, content, and method of presentation of programs.

4) As the level of socio/economic groups rises in an area to displace lower levels, the college-going rate may increase but the number of younger children will be fewer -- which may adversely affect college enrollment in the longer run.

C. The data for shifts in both socio/economic levels and ethnic composition can be obtained by individual college surveys of the elementary and high schools in its service area or from special populations studies conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the

Census (usually requested and paid for by local business organizations or the city or county government).

1) Now that the 1980 Census is imminent, a wealth of more accurate and current data than we have had since the 1970 Census will be available. Those data may be compared from one census period to the other.

2) Census tract and voting district data can be purchased directly from the Bureau of the Census at a relatively low cost, once the data are tabulated and put in the Bureau computer.

2. Changes and fluctuations in labor demand for business, industry, and government located in the college service area

A. Local metro/regional data largely determine where community colleges and four-year colleges can market their graduates. Surveys of business, industry, and government help in making such assessments; so do data on trends of students entering the various academic and professional/technical programs of the college.

B. The National Science Foundation projects national needs for scientists and engineers, including the social sciences. The Department of Labor makes similar projections for all occupations. Labor manpower projections are notoriously unreliable for the long run but much more valid for short-term planning. Combining national data with local surveys of future labor needs can provide a significant base from which a college can plan for program changes to meet the needs indicated.

C. The lead time for planning from national and local data is probably not valid for more than a few years, perhaps five. But this is sufficient time so that a college can be far along in responding to changes revealed by the forecasts and trend data. Longer term, tentative planning can build in contingencies so that implementation of plans can be revised, speeded up, or slowed down as the results of new data or surveys become known.

3. Index of enterprises targeted for subsidies by the federal government

A. The federal government in responding to policy needs heavily subsidizes training and research necessary to carry out its objectives. Federal space, environment, and energy objectives are identified at least a year or two before large subsidies are appropriated.

B. Most of these heavily subsidized programs of the federal government (and occasionally of the state) require specially trained manpower. Often, the array of specializations requires the government to provide financial aid to students and categorical incentive grants to institutions to strengthen existing programs or to create new ones.

C. Institutional administrators can keep alert to these shifts in federal policy, and can plan to rearrange programs and courses to fit the particular requirements of the policy. Institutions with early proposals in to the government for education and training will have a decided advantage over less energetic and imaginative ones, especially if it can be shown that proposed programs can be rapidly implemented.

D. Continuous review of the policy shifts may also warn institutional administrators of when to make similar accommodation for cutting back on existing federally subsidized programs.

4. Live births and the demand for teachers

A. Now that the number of live births has risen about 8 percent since 1974 rather than continuing to decline sharply, there will soon be need for newly trained teachers. The reversal of the trend line began in 1974, so starting in the fall of 1979 the number of five-year olds will increase. The Bureau of the Census projects a gradual rise in the birth rate which should lead to a substantial increase in the number of live births by the year 2000.

B. Teachers for the early elementary grades will be first needed and then on up the grade levels as the new numbers of students enter. Migration trends within the service area as well as local live birth trends must be considered in projections for each school area.

C. Caution must be used in relation to all projections. The Bureau of the Census has been greatly in error in its national projections of live births for the past ten years, so it is imperative that birth data be examined in the college service area rather than accepting national or even state trends as indicative of what will occur in a particular locality.

D. Sources of data: Current Population Reports and related special reports of the Bureau of the Census; vital statistics of U.S. Public Health Service.

5. Source of students by geographic area

A. Some universities and colleges draw students from certain geographic areas not immediately contiguous to the institution, especially from the largest city in the state (e.g., Detroit, Chicago, New York). These schools can examine the demographic shifts occurring in the pertinent distant localities to determine if major changes in ethnic composition or socio/economic level is occurring in one or more of the areas. Shifts could result in either decreases or increases in enrollment.

B. Examples: Institutions in San Diego and other places in California draw heavily from the Los Angeles area. The population shifts indicate the great majority of the people in Los Angeles will soon be minority Black and Chicano. These minorities have graduated from high school in smaller proportions than whites and often have fewer qualifications for entering college even after graduation. Thus the shifts in population affect enrollment not only in the Los Angeles colleges but in others which draw from there a portion of their student body.

6. Occupational trends

A. Career counselors study materials from state, federal, and local governmental and other sources to see what jobs may be available in the future. This knowledge is passed on to students who wish to enroll in programs directed at the occupations in short supply.

B. Students also get similar job information from friends, parents, the press, and T.V. advertising. These and other sources along with government policies cause the "fads" of students jumping from one popular academic program to another. This erratic student demand in turn creates need for reallocation of resources within the institution.

C. The college or university should have a planning group that reviews predictions of occupational trends and that suggests shifts in internal resource allocation in anticipation of probable shifts in student interests.

7. Changing student profiles

A. Age, sex, ethnicity, program majors, level of ability, skills, and other pertinent data about students in each program, by level of instruction, provide, over time, valuable indicators of change.

B. These characteristics, if shown quantitatively and by trend lines, will give an institution strong indications of the changing nature of its environment, thus preparing it for changes in programs and program emphasis, in the kinds of student services which should be increased or decreased, and in the types of faculty members who can best serve the clientele which the institution will be attracting.

8. Student flow from high schools

A. The relationship between students' high school areas of emphasis and college attendance is sometimes overlooked. A review of high school records in the college service area can reveal the numbers and proportions of students from each high school with particular academic interests that attend the college. Student SAT and ACT declarations of program interest would be of special benefit. A more thorough examination can provide trends. Such data tell an institution something about the attractiveness of its several different programs -- which attract students, which do not. This knowledge allows the college to focus both recruiting activity and program review on particular programs.

B. The college can improve the programs which do not attract students or can select the programs which obviously have the best image and improve them. It can also strike up new professional relationships between the faculty members of the college and those of the high schools by interest areas, improving the possibility of attracting particular students. This may be done by drawing in the appropriate high school teachers for short conferences, workshops, and socials. The high school teachers will be aided intellectually and practically, and, at the same time, subtly apprised of the virtues of the college program. On-going personal relationships between the faculties can benefit both the high school in preparation of its students and the college in attracting them and knowing their needs and characteristics.

C. Few colleges have these data available, i.e., the number of graduates from each high school in its service area by program of college preference and later entered into in the college. If the percentage is dropping, the college needs to examine the appropriateness or quality of its programs. If some majors are attracted and others are not, the reasons for the latter condition should be determined and corrected.

9. Trends of student interest in disciplines and professions

A. If enrollment increases in programs which have had recent high popularity with students begin to taper off, the institution is likely to face a general enrollment decline.

B. Turnabouts in student interest in new programs rarely occur quickly so a drop in the enrollment rate for popular programs augurs ill for the near future enrollment for the total institution. Compensations may be made by quickly inaugurating or expanding programs which projections of occupational trends or other factors suggest to be ascending in student interest.

SHORT-RANGE INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS LITTLE OR NO CONTROL

10. Manpower markets and enrollment

A. A market area in which a manpower shortage exists probably reduces the number of full-time students in local colleges but may increase the number of adults in evening courses, depending on the relationship of courses and programs offered to the manpower needs of local industries. (The South Bay Area is such a location in California where electronic and micro-circuitry courses and programs rapidly expand along with the computer-based industries.)

B. Special classes for specific industries may be started as a cooperative enterprise with the industry paying for classes or for tuition. Quick response to these demands or needs puts the college in a continuing close relationship with the industries that rely on college manpower production. Several colleges in the area may offer joint programs that could provide specialization and eliminate possible duplication.

C. If widespread unemployment develops in an area, the college-going rate and the retention rate after entry is likely to increase. This is especially true if student financial aid programs are numerous and liberally funded.

11. Four-year colleges offering two-year programs

A. To compete for enrollments, four-year institutions may attempt to offer two-year A.A. degrees or certificates, especially in technical and occupational areas. More likely, their competition will be less direct — that is, general education courses may be shifted to the upper division in four-year programs with the result that students will be able to obtain job entry skills in the first two years just as they could at a community college.

B. As enrollments drop during the 1980s, each system of institutions — and each institution as well — will compete for students by a variety of practices which can only be called proselyting. If state intervention by direct policy or by budgetary incentives and disincentives does not occur, one can expect a change in the character of individual institutions and of their student bodies.

C. Increased numbers or proportions of students in programs designed for two-year job entry will affect the image of the four-year colleges which compete for overall enrollment numbers without considering the longer term implications of that competition.

12. Average student loads

A. If the average class hour or credit hour load of students is decreasing, a greater number of students is required to justify the budget formerly generated on a full-time equivalent student basis.

B. In recent years the average number of students in colleges and universities has increased but the number of full-time equivalent students has diminished. That reduction adversely affects the budgets of many institutions although they publicly pronounce enrollment increases. Careful monitoring of students in the various majors and programs may lead to indications of why students are reducing their loads, e.g., hard courses may require excessive study time.

C. This trend of decreasing workloads, however, seems to arise from societal forces over which the institution has little control. The work/study syndrome has caught on in American society. In the long run it may be of much benefit to the nation and the individuals involved, but it can also mean weaknesses in program, faculty, or services that, if corrected, would return the students to a full course load. Whatever the cause of the trend the institution must be aware of its implications for program support, class size, number of classes, and the financial decrements resulting.

D. Institutions confronting a rapid shift toward part-time enrollment know that costs of some services such as counseling, admission, registration, and record keeping increase rather than decrease. Academic costs may decrease because of the reduced number of classes and faculty members.

13. Amount of uncertainty in obtaining the next budget

A. A sure sign of difficulty is when funding sources themselves become unreliable and unpredictable; the resulting ad hoc and stop-gap measures weaken the quality of programs, create poor morale, and prevent the efficient use of resources.

B. The most distinguished faculty and administrators will search for other jobs with more security, and potential applicants for vacant positions will do the same.

C. The only current escape from the impact of uncertainty is through use of reserve funds or budget slack. Large endowments of uncommitted funds can do the same thing. Most colleges and universities either do not have or are rapidly losing these options today, if for no other reason than soaring inflation.

D. Public policy can be directed to relieving the level of budgetary uncertainty. It has in some nations and a few U.S. states where legislatures and executives guarantee budgets, at least in principle, for two or three years.

PART B

INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS SOME OR TOTAL CONTROL

Indicators which the campus can control to some degree are usually found in its internal operations and management. Attention to trend data and careful analyses can furnish an institution many short-range and a few long-range indices of its general health both academically and financially.


| Long-range indicators | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| 14. | Physical environment of the campus | 22 |
| 15. | Proportion of the total operations budget composed of soft money | 23 |
| 16. | Decrease in the number of transfer students from the community colleges | 24 |
| **Short-range indicators** | | |
| 17. | Admission standards | 25 |
| 18. | Hiring from within | 26 |
| 19. | Unmet program needs | 27 |
| 20. | Program mix and potential clientele | 28 |
| 21. | Increasing unit costs | 29 |
| 22. | Increasing percentage of total faculty are part-time | 30 |
| 23. | Percent of faculty teaching outside of their primary fields of specialization | 31 |
| 24. | Regular faculty assigned to unusual teaching hours | 32 |
| 25. | Institution not staffing at traditional constant dollar rate for additional students | 33 |
| 26. | Encouragement of early retirement of faculty and staff | 34 |
| 27. | Proportion of faculty with over- or underloads | 35 |

28. Period between closing date for application and actual registration date 36

29. Drop in application rates for admission 37

30. Increasing or decreasing dropout rates 38

31. Overload of career counselors 39

32. Placement of graduates 40

33. Supply, equipment, and travel budgets 41

34. Faculty salaries growing disproportionate to the total budget 42

35. Application of, or increased fees for support of selective services 43

LONG RANGE INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS SOME OR TOTAL CONTROL

14. Physical environment of the campus

A. The campus environment in all its aspects can be an important attraction for students. An indicator of financial stress is the delay of maintenance of campus buildings and grounds. If the delay continues because budgets are emaciated to support programs of poor quality or overstaffing to protect jobs, the institution is in trouble.

B. Shoddy buildings and grounds impair student attraction and retention. In setting budget priorities in times of stress, the ambience of the campus is often neglected and leads to further enrollment and resource losses.

15. Proportion of the total operations budget composed of soft money

A. If a major fraction of essential operations and any proportion of the regular tenured faculty are supported on soft money an institution can be in almost instant trouble. If funds come from only a few sources, the danger is greater than if the sources are more numerous and diverse.

B. State governments have not been enthusiastic about picking up the pieces when federal programs reduce funding and even less so when foundation grants dry up. Shifting regular faculty members who have been "earning" a large fraction of their salaries from soft money sources to the regular budget of an institution can cause havoc with the budget, and will surely affect the campus as a whole unless alternative income is found.

C. Both program and human considerations enter in. Programs originally started on soft money may have become an integral part of the curriculum and may need continuance to meet planned campus objectives. The campus financial plan should take soft money operations into consideration and contain contingency provisions to assure that at least the most vital of such operations can be preserved. The loss of faculty who have been on soft money even though the program may not be essential can also affect the general morale, and if a member is highly distinguished, impair the reputation and credibility of the entire faculty.

16. Decrease in the number of transfer students from the community colleges

A. As community colleges responded to student demand by establishing more one- and two-year technical and occupational programs for job entry, the proportion of students preparing for transfer to four-year institutions diminished. As transfers decrease, the senior level institutions recruit more freshmen to compensate for the lost transfer enrollments. In turn, this reduces the number of freshmen in the community colleges and will ultimately further reduce the number of transfers. A continuing trend of recruiting freshmen by senior level institutions will reduce the total enrollment in the community colleges and place in the four-year colleges students who would, in the past, have attended the community colleges.

B. Even in California, where stated admission standards prohibit the University of California and the State University and Colleges from an open-door policy, the number of students which they can actively and legally recruit could decimate the ranks of potential community college students. Leaders of community colleges fear their institutions will become technical institutes and/or ones known primarily for adult and continuing education.

SHORT RANGE INDICATORS OVER WHICH THE INSTITUTION HAS SOME OR TOTAL CONTROL

17. Admission standards

A. The lowering of admission standards by higher prestige institutions adversely affects institutions lower in the prestige scale. If four-year colleges obtain an insufficient number of transfer students from community colleges, they increase their freshman/sophomore enrollments in relation to the upper division enrollments. Each campus seeks new sources of freshman students.

B. Without any change in admission standards, the UCLAs, Berkeleys, and the more prestigious campuses in the State University and Colleges system will be able to increase enrollments while other institutions lose them. If admission standards should be lowered by the prestige schools, enrollments would be substantially affected for the less prestigious and newer four-year campuses in the two senior level systems and the community colleges. (The change which the University made in admission standards for transfer students in the early 1970s directly affected the number of such students going to nearby state colleges and universities.)

18. Hiring from within

A. Nationwide or regional searches for the best persons possible for both faculty and administration positions were common for all of academe in the 1960s. Now, even with affirmative action regulations, institutions and/or systems of them tend to cut costs by limiting the search and cut risks by considering local people whose capabilities are already known — even if those talents are modest. "I would rather have a lot of good average people around me than prima donnas." Or, "Don't rock this shaky boat." When a system or campus hires from within or hires its own graduates, it is usually a sign of financial stress or of conservatism or perhaps both.

19. Unmet program needs

A. If programs which would meet a known need in the region or locality (or nation if a research university) are not undertaken for lack of funding, the institution needs to reexamine its program priorities and perhaps cut back or eliminate some programs to get resources for new endeavors. If budgets are steady or declining, savings can be obtained if the senior faculty and staff from discontinued programs are laid off and new lower ranking faculty hired for added programs.

B. When institutions lose all their slack in the nonacademic part of the budget (usually early in the cutback period), only program and faculty elimination can provide the resources needed for building new programs or services. A few institutions have planned early enough to have funded some new programs from original budget slack and from savings in nonacademic areas without serious jeopardy to the nonacademic activities. Such planning can be successful if done early, i.e., before hard cutbacks are necessary.

20. Program mix and potential clientele

A. As the population characteristics in the service area (or areas) of an institution change, programs need to be reviewed and changed to make them appealing to the new clientele or loss of enrollment is inevitable.

B. Such need for program review occurs when certain ethnic groups gain dramatically in proportion to the historic population of the area, when the socio/economic level of the population shifts either upward or downward, or when retired or single persons move in to occupy much of the housing.

C. The degree of change and the direction of trends need to be carefully considered before making major adjustments. While large population shifts may mean rather dramatic changes in the nature of existing programs or their abandonment in favor of more appropriate ones, planners must also recognize that the total environment may not have changed. Laissez faire is not advocated: careful, pertinent planning is.

21. Increasing unit costs

A. If, as enrollment drops, an institution maintains its academic program much as it has with higher enrollments, unit costs will rise in some proportion to the drop in enrollments. Discontinuance of courses and subprograms reduces unit costs very little unless related faculty and staff are also released.

B. Most colleges wish to release faculty by attrition (motivated by humanitarian concerns). However, the vacancies which do occur are not necessarily in the subject areas where the cutbacks need to be made. Reliance on attrition usually means general program deterioration — and certain detriment to the students enrolled. Discontinuing the weakest programs and the faculty in them can provide the resources to strengthen better programs or start new programs with greater relevance to campus objectives than those terminated — and simultaneously reduce overall unit costs.

C. A college is probably in growing trouble if the costs of many programs are increasing faster than inflation indicators.

22. Increasing percentage of total faculty are part-time

A. Full-time tenured faculty are institutional hostages to fortune. The most common hedge of administrators against both an uncertain financial future and unpredictable student demand is to hire part-time contract faculty rather than regular full-time faculty who would be expected to go on to receive tenure and other perquisites.

B. As signs of financial trouble deepen, the part-time people are let go and the courses or programs which they staffed are dropped entirely, or else regular faculty in the institution pick them up. Particularly in community colleges, the part-time instructors may be highly qualified specialists in a subject, so their loss can seriously affect a program.

C. The strategy of having a reserve of part-time faculty to release in times of financial stress can be successful, but the strategy must be implemented under very controlled circumstances with quality of program as the chief goal.

23. Percent of faculty teaching outside of their primary fields of specialization

A. Perhaps the surest sign of giving tenured faculty preference over academic program quality for students is when the number of faculty teaching in secondary or tertiary fields of interest increases.

B. Quality of a program suffers when a full-time faculty member is teaching outside his specialized competence. Fighting to maintain tenured faculty members by assigning them to tasks for which they are not capable of performing with excellence leads only to the diminishment of program quality, institutional reputation and, subsequently, further enrollment loss.

24. Regular faculty assigned to unusual teaching hours

A. Increasing assignment of faculty to evening and weekend courses when this has not been the custom usually indicates that part-time faculty have been released because of financial stress or dropping enrollments.

B. Such assignment practice has become characteristic of institutions that are cutting back for financial reasons. Where part-time faculty or adjunct ones formerly were hired to teach in these "undesirable" time periods, the regular faculty are now assigned. The fact that these tenured faculty take the odd hours indicates that they too realize the deteriorating financial condition of the institution.

C. In specific situations, "odd" assignments may not indicate stress. The institution may be starting new programs at unusual hours to cater to a new clientele, and, by using regular full-time faculty, insure quality.

25. Institution not staffing at traditional constant dollar rate for additional students

A. If the college or university does not continue to receive in constant dollars the same amount of income for marginal increases in students as it has in the past, one can be sure that some source of revenue is drying up.

B. The source could be a major one such as the state appropriation for public institutions or the income fund from tuition or from sales of certain products or services by the institution. Whatever the source or cause, the institution is in some financial trouble and under stress.

26. Encouragement of early retirement of faculty and staff

A. Encouraging faculty to retire early may or may not be a sign of financial trouble but it does indicate stress.

B. It indicates financial stress if an attempt is being made to save dollars from the retirement of expensive professors in order to hire less costly assistant professors or lecturers. It is programmatic and quality-oriented if the purpose is to bring in new young people to replace professors who are past their prime, or to bring in a "star" to lead a program. These causes might operate simultaneously.

C. When an institution invites or subsidizes early retirement except on a highly selective basis, something is wrong internally.

27. Proportion of faculty with over- or underloads

A. If faculties are gradually but surely acquiring larger classes and/or larger teaching loads, it is a good indication that the campus is in budget stress; or else money is being diverted into new enterprises within the institution.

B. While the evidence that larger teaching loads and larger class sizes diminish the quality of programs is not very conclusive, there obviously is a limit to each person's capacity to perform effectively as numbers increase. The threshold of capacity will vary by the kinds of students, their preparation and talents, and by the kinds of courses which are taught. New technologies may help considerably if student/faculty ratios increase but probably not in all courses and programs.

C. Underloads or overstaffing drive up the unit costs of colleges. If the faculty who could be released because of reduction in program resulting from declining enrollment are in fact released, unit costs can be kept from rising substantially.

D. A core of faculty in essential service programs must be kept employed regardless of demand and so too must those who teach essential courses for a major. An institution may have underloads in low student demand programs and overloads in programs of growing popularity. Staff reductions in the one and increases in the other may be the only solution program quality. Problems of morale may crop up and be very difficult to ameliorate. Collective bargaining also may make it impossible for an institution to have great ranges in faculty loads.

E. Trend data on faculty workloads by discipline or program are essential, internal guides for campus management.

28. Period between closing date for application and actual registration date

A. As the closing date for applications moves closer and closer to the registration date, it is a sure sign the institution is in enrollment difficulty.

B. Almost without thinking seriously about it, administrators may move the date for termination of application nearer to the actual time of registration in order to attract more students. Particularly is this true if enrollment has already shown some drop. An early warning indicator is the moving of that closing date for applications toward the first date of classes.

C. When an institution has only accepted students for the fall term and not during the remainder of the year and begins to accept applications for other regular terms, the chances are that enrollment shortfalls account for the change rather than attempts to improve the accessibility or quality of programs.

29. Drop in application rates for admission

A. If an historical pattern shows a gradual (or even sharp) decline in the rate of applications as a correlate to the number of students later entering the campus, the trend may provide a valuable indicator.

B. These trends are difficult to analyze since students often apply to more than one college or university for entrance. The trend in the number of institutions to which students apply has continued to increase since 1969. This indicator provides three to six months to plan for changes that may be required to accommodate the projected registrations, whether that number be up or down.

30. Increasing or decreasing dropout rates

A. Dropout rates of students fully enrolled in a program give some indication of the appropriateness of the program for students and of the general worth of the program in serving its particular clientele.

B. Such rates, if gradually declining, indicate positive signs of an improving program and teaching situation — providing that the rate drop is not taking place during an economic recession. An economic downturn usually leads to greater retention and to a tendency for increases in enrollment. Retention will vary by region and locality with some areas not suffering an economic decline while others may be severely hit.

C. Under normal conditions, an increasingly high dropout rate means that a program is not properly serving the clientele attracted to the institution. Either students should be better screened on entry or the program or faculty changed.

31. Overload of career counselors

A. Counselors can be overloaded with student demands for service if the students cannot easily find career programs in the institution which fit their occupational goals.

B. If programs are limited in scope or if unemployment occurs in fields for which the institution prepares workers, the students turn to more counseling. If enrollment remains steady but demands for counseling increase, the chances are that the institution needs to examine its programs and its schedule of classes along with the quality and appropriateness of existing services.

32. Placement of graduates

A. Data developed over time on the number of graduates, their placement by type and location of job, initial salary, and other elements can reveal whether current graduates are doing as well or better than those of previous years.

B. Major shifts in any of these elements may tell the program leaders about some outside environmental conditions of which they would not otherwise be aware. Shifts may also warn them that the program and its graduates are no longer viewed with a former degree of esteem. Every department needs such data although the data are rarely easy to obtain or keep current.

C. These data, if made available centrally to an institutional research office provide a basis for tracking the trends and making analyses to inform the top administration of what is happening to graduates from each of the institutional programs. These data aid in setting program and faculty priorities.

33. Supply, equipment, and travel budgets

A. If supplies, travel, and equipment budgets in instructional units are cut or more carefully examined or if the time line for purchases is extended, the faculty should be alerted that trouble is really besetting the institution — or that it is imminent.

B. These items are highly vulnerable to early cuts at the inception of budget stress. These cuts usually follow those made in nonacademic and maintenance personnel and precede cuts in courses, programs, and faculty.

34. Faculty salaries growing disproportionate to the total budget

A. If the salary budget for academic personnel gradually increases in proportion to the total budget, then it is very likely that the institution is already in financial trouble and cuts are being made in classified and maintenance personnel and in travel. If 75 to 80 percent or more of a faculty is already tenured, the chances are that operating costs will continue to increase as these persons age, get promotions and merit increases — regardless of the number of students enrolled.

B. Reduction in the budgets of services and maintenance can accumulate only for a short period before causing permanent damage. The amounts allocated for supporting services and related activities can be wiped out almost entirely if they are used to offset inflationary impacts or outright budget cuts to keep tenured faculty completely intact. The damage is to quality of education for students.

C. If slack is lost and faculty are not released, there remains little or no funding flexibility to create new programs or respond to other new needs which could be the salvation of the institution. Programs are simply lost with no replacement possible. Looking at the long run of twelve years of dropping enrollment, initial reductions should be carefully selected and an immediate review made of which academic and service programs to sacrifice before eliminating all slack and flexibility or permanently damaging the support services.

35. Application of, or increased fees for support of selective services

A. If the government dictates the initiation of a fee or an increase, the institution may not be in financial trouble, but if the institution does the initiating it is a sign of money problems internally and of changing priorities.

B. An early method of recovering lost resources when an institution finds itself in some financial difficulty is to charge fees for services which were formerly free to the client. As funds become more difficult to obtain, the fees gradually creep upward. Such fees can affect the enrollments of the institution and of programs especially targeted by fee activities. The fees are likely to be more detrimental to the regular college age students than to the older age group who normally come from higher income brackets.